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Funeral Sermon.

1 COR. 15, 55—57.

IN CHRIST JESUS, OUR RESURRECTED SAVIOR, DEARLY BELOVED
MOURNERS AND FRIENDS:

There is cause for the tears which fall upon this coffin, there is good cause for the sobs heard about this grave. Whoever doubts that can certainly not have known her who is here sleeping the last slumber of the righteous. For nearly twenty years she was a dutiful, loving wife—unchangeable in her affection and faithful to her plighted troth. During all her life she was a dear daughter, doubly dear because her heart never lost its warm attachment to father and mother. In the home she was the kindest of sisters, cheerful, loving, and beloved. But she was known beyond the circle of the family. God gave her an opportunity to carry the same benedictions which she scattered at home into a larger field of usefulness. She was known in the church of God. Full of energy, full of zeal for the Lord's glory, she was a blessing to pastor and congregation. Oh, when we all think of what she has been to us we must spontaneously exclaim: "God bless her for the many deeds of kindness and service rendered to the least of His saints." Indeed, to-day our mourning is sincere; not only the family but the whole congregation is a mourner here, for her prayers, her work, and her example were used of God for the upbuilding of His church. But though we weep, yet we have not come here simply to lament, or to discourage one another. No, in the midst of our tears we have cause for thanksgiving. For thanksgiving? say you. For what can we thank God since He has taken her from us? For this:—*Our loss is her gain.* Yes, my beloved, however great our loss is—and it is great—her gain is greater, for she belonged to those who could say: "For me to die is gain" and:

For me to live is Jesus,
To die is gain for me;
To Him I gladly yield me
And die right cheerfully.

At her grave therefore we can speak those words of glorying Christian triumph: "*O death, where is thy sting? O grave, where is thy victory? But thanks be to God which giveth us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ.*" And do you ask:

WHAT IS THE CHRISTIAN'S TRIUMPH OVER DEATH?

I answer: It is this, that

- I. *for him death has lost its sting, and*
- II. *the grave has lost its victory.*

I.

The Bible pictures death to us as a fearful monster with poisonous sting. It comes upon all and must be met by all. Each man and woman must face him in single combat. This is not a picture too highly colored. It is a terrible reality. And it is foolish and weak to try to forget this certainty, the certainty of death. It is worse than foolish to try to make light of death. One has said:

O God, it is a fearful thing
To see the human soul take wing.

And indeed, whoever has seen it will hardly be able to think of it without a shudder. And now *that* which makes death so horrible and terrifying we call its *sting*. What, then, is the sting of death? Is it the great bodily suffering that often precedes death? Is it the thought of leaving a family in distressed circumstances? Is it to be torn out of a happy and contented life of ease and enjoyment? No, all this is not the real sting of death. "The sting of death is sin,"—says our text! That which makes death the King of terrors is *sin*. That which makes death so horrible and terrifying is *sin*. The sting of death is *sin*.—Death is not the natural close of our earthly life. God had a different provision, but sin brought *death*. "The wages of sin is death," says the Scripture, and our own conscience tells us: "Death is the curse upon sin," and therefore also sin is the sting of death. The transgressing of the righteous law of a holy God makes death an agony.—Oh! methinks I see a sinner die: the chill is at his heart, the ice upon his brow, appalling is the specter Death, but nearer and nearer, clearer and clearer, around him and behind him there is a horrible swarm. What is it? They are the sins of the dying sinner. He looks up and beholds an angry God whom he has offended early and late, whom he has dishonored, blasphemed, defied, whose laws he has transgressed. He looks around and beholds his fellow men—his bad example has led some astray and others to ruin; cursed of God and of man he sinks. He looks below and sees hell staring him in the face. Remorse bites

like an adder, regrets torture him. And when the last breath has left his body his soul is with Dives, there where their worm dieth not and their fire is not quenched. His sins have brought the curse upon him unto the uttermost, because of his sin his death means eternal damnation. "The sting of death is sin."

Is this the doom of all who die? Thank God, it is not. Listen! There is one of whom the angel said: "Thou shalt call His name Jesus, for He shall save His people from their sins." And He has saved us from our sins, He took our sins upon Himself and was wounded for our transgressions. "Christ hath redeemed us from the curse of the law, being made a curse for us." "Christ His own self bore our sins in His own body on the tree." There on the cross He shed His blood, and "the blood of Jesus Christ His Son cleanseth us from all sin." In removing our sin, He robbed death of its sting. Aye, "Christ hath abolished death and hath brought life and immortality to light. The blessings of His glorious victory are offered to all who hear of His conflict and His triumph. Whosoever believeth in Him shall not taste death. For every believer Christ's words become true again: "I am the resurrection and the life: He that believeth in me, though he were dead, yet shall he live; and whosoever liveth and believeth in me shall never die." To a believer in Christ therefore death is an entrance into a life of eternal happiness with God, a life full of joys and void of evil. The Christian's triumph over death is this that for him death has lost its sting, its terror, and its curse, and has become a sleep of peace.

And now, that is the first cause of our thanksgiving to-day. She who rests here was such a Christian; for her death had lost its sting. Death did not come suddenly; it came slowly, and she knew of its approach, but for her there was no sting in death. Her sins she had oft confessed to God with sorrow and had found joy and comfort in that mighty Savior, the crucified Lord. In Jesus' words she had found peace, and His Spirit had entered her heart. How often did she say it! And this faith made her strong in the hour of trial. She did not dread death. Again and again she expressed her submission to God's will. God had blessed her with a happy home: she loved and she was beloved. She was content and therefore she had no morbid desire to leave those blessings which God had showered upon her, but yet she was willing to enter the greater glories of heaven. Said she to me during a visit: "We Christians have a great advantage in case of sickness. We know if the Lord leaves us here, it is well, and we rejoice to think of health and old enjoyments; but if it is not His will, we go to a place even better than this." She had lost all fear of death—death for her had lost

its sting. And if some one would say, "Yes, but she had to suffer so much," was she not by this suffering also conformed to Christ? If we suffer with Him, we shall rise with Him. "*No cross, no crown!*" "Beloved, think it not strange concerning the fiery trial which is to try you as though some strange thing happened to you, but rejoice, inasmuch as ye are partakers of Christ's suffering, that when His glory shall be revealed ye may be glad with exceeding joy." "Whom the Lord loveth He chasteneth. If ye be without chastisement, then are ye not sons." Do not these words explain her sufferings? Whoever thinks it strange that a Christian must suffer has certainly never become acquainted with Christ's expressed promises. Our Lord was ever careful to inform all who came to Him that in the world they would have tribulation, yea, that only through much tribulation could we enter the kingdom.

The unbeliever, of course, will speak of the Christian as he spoke of the Christ: "Others He saved, Himself He cannot save." But why heed those whose minds have been darkened by lives of lust and sin? Her sorrows are all ended, her joys have begun. Last year she eagerly heard the story of Christ's suffering during this Passion season, this year she suffered with Him and has gone to be glorified with Him. Of her death we may say:

Asleep in Jesus' blessed sleep
From which none ever wakes to weep,
A calm and undisturbed repose,
Unbroken by the last of foes.

II.

In our text, beloved, the apostle does not only glory in the fact that death has lost its sting but also in this, that for the Christian the grave has lost its victory. The grave is a mighty conqueror. How many a conqueror was conquered by the grave! Death and the grave lay low the mightiest of the earth. But there is one before whom they quailed and fled, by whom they were stricken and conquered, and that one is the Christ, Son of God and child of man, who became our champion against death, hell, and the grave. "He was delivered for our offenses." On Calvary He suffered, fought, and gave His life into death. But the grave could not hold Him. He arose on Easter morn when He had "abolished death and brought life and immortality to light." "He was raised for our justification." By His resurrection God has assured the world that our sins are covered, our iniquity is pardoned. "Whosoever believeth in Him shall not perish, but have everlasting life." Our bodies are also laid into the grave, but at the call of Christ they shall come forth glo-

rified and made like unto His glorious body. Thus the Christian triumphs over the grave. It cannot conquer him, it must serve him.

And that is another cause for our thanksgiving to-day. To her who sleeps here the grave is not a dark, hopeless terror, but a quiet chamber of sweet rest in which her body will await the summons from on high to enter with the soul in the habitations of glory. She could say:

I would not live always;
No, welcome the tomb,
Since Jesus has lain there
I dread not its gloom.
There sweet be my rest
Till He bids me arise
To hail Him in triumph
Descending the skies.

“O grave, where is thy victory?” At the hour appointed by her God and Father death had to take her. The grave must receive her body to give it up at the trumpet of the resurrection. We thank God she was not conquered, no, she gained the victory. My friends, what made her strong to overcome? She overcame by the blood of the Lamb and by the word of His testimony. God gave her strength through His Word and Sacrament. She loved God’s Word. Every true Christian does. This Word was her joy also in the last illness. She often expressed her delight in hearing the Word of her Savior and King. She prayed with her husband, with her pastor, and with her nurses. Repeatedly she expressed her gratitude for the spiritual refreshment and comfort of the Lord’s Supper. What a blessing it is that we could bring her these blessings and thus send a light into her hours of suffering. The ungodly may use the same earthly remedies and the same medical skill, but we Christians can give our loved ones a higher joy. We can do more for our dear ones than knife or potion can accomplish. We can bring to them the Water of Life.

My dear brother, you that have lost a faithful wife, my dear brother and sister, you that have lost a loving daughter, if you now grieve that the Lord took her, rejoice that He gave her to you at all. What sweet consolation it is to know that her battles are all over. God grant that you and all your dear ones may reach that glory which we trust is hers now. And you, her brothers and sisters in the congregation, remember her example of faith, of quietness, of devotion, and let us all promise to be faithful to that Lord whom she loved and whom she served. Her course is finished, her crown is won, but we are still in the midst of battle and we are weak and frail, our foes are many and mighty, our strength is little. Let us, then, take our refuge to our mighty Lord and to His word of power,

that through the attentive, frequent, and prayerful hearing of God's holy Word the Almighty Lord may give us His strength to endure even unto the end and be saved. Let us, therefore, now and ever fervently ask the Lord for that for which we pray in the hymn which we have sung again to-day :

Swift to its close ebbs out life's little day;
Earth's joys grow dim, its glories pass away;
Change and decay in all around I see;
O Thou who changest not, abide with me!

I fear no foe, with Thee at hand to bless:
Ills have no weight, and tears no bitterness.
Where is death's sting? where, grave, thy victory?
I triumph still, if Thou abide with me!

Hold Thou Thy cross before my closing eyes,
Shine through the gloom, and point me to the skies;
Heaven's morning breaks, and earth's vain shadows flee;
In life, in death, O Lord, abide with me!

M. S. S.

Outlines for Sermons on the Gospel-Lessons.

Sunday Exaudi.

JOHN 15, 26—16, 4.

God keeps us in this world for a purpose. He does it for our own sakes. He wants to improve our character and make us better Christians by the trials and afflictions of this life. — We are also left here for the sake of others. We are to help in bringing them to the knowledge of our Savior. The chief way of doing this is by

BEARING WITNESS FOR JESUS.

I. *It is our duty to bear witness for Jesus.*

Two reasons are stated in our text:

a. Because the Comforter whom Christ has sent into our hearts testifies of Jesus to us, and He desires, through us, to testify to others, v. 26; for *α*. God, as a rule, works mediately in the kingdom of grace, *β*. He employs the testimony of men as a means for converting other men, and *γ*. only those, of course, can bear such witness as have the testimony of the Comforter in their own hearts.

b. Because we are "with Jesus," v. 27. *α*. The apostles enjoyed peculiar advantages in this respect. They had been with Jesus *from the beginning*, had heard His sermons, seen His miracles, etc. *β*. But we, too, are "with Him," and He is with us. He com-

municates with us through His written Word and His Sacraments. We hold communion with Him in prayer. Truly, our intercourse with Him is most intimate. We feel His presence everywhere and always. We are well qualified to bear witness for Him. It is our sacred duty to do so. It is His will: "Ye also shall bear witness."

II. *We must not let anything deter us, therefore, from bearing witness for Jesus.*

a. Such witness brings the enmity and persecution of the world and of false Christians upon us, v. 2. *α.* In our time and country we are comparatively free from the grosser forms of persecution (religious liberty). *β.* But we, too, are exposed to the ridicule and denunciations of false Christians and worldlings. (Our strict adherence to God's Word is decried by liberalists and unionists as bigotry.)

b. Worldlings and false Christians persecute those who bear witness for Jesus and His truth: *α.* because they often think that they are doing God a service thereby. (Men who denounce us as bigoted no doubt often think they are doing God service thereby.) *β.* This is, because "they have not known the Father nor Christ." Either they have a false Christ, a false conception of Him and His kingdom (sectarian churches), or they have no Christ and no God whatever (infidels, Jews, Unitarians, Mormons, etc.).

c. We have been told these things beforehand by Christ, that we might not be offended at them. *α.* If we had not been told, we might be caused by them to doubt our discipleship and the Savior's love towards us. *β.* As it is, we ought to be ready to meet them. "To be forewarned is to be forearmed."

May God grant us a fearless heart to bear all the enmity that a consistent witness for Jesus may bring upon us. G. L.

An Exposition of the Beatitudes of Our Lord.

Second Beatitude.

MATT. 5, 4.

"Blessed are they that mourn!" Who ever heard of such a thing? That is certainly very strange doctrine. "Blessed are the merry!" is the beatitude of the world. For that reason the world is always straining every nerve to get merriment and amusement. "Blessed are the merry!" For that reason the world has parties, and banquets, and balls, and theaters, and celebrations, and what not, in order to make merry and enjoy a good time. For that reason

the people that can entertain on a magnificent scale are proud of it, and their rivals envy them for it. For that reason the poor say sullenly: "They are not in trouble as other men; neither are they plagued like other men," Ps. 73, 5.

The language of the Gospel is, "Blessed are they that mourn." Now, those that take a dark view of things look upon the world as a house of mourning and bewail everything. Even the most light-hearted must admit that there is much sickness, distress, and death in the world, and naturally also much mourning. If all they that mourn are blessed, certainly this world is full of people that are blessed. Well were it for men if every mourner were blessed, but, sad to say, not every mourning is hallowed by a blessing. The mourning of Cain, the mourning of Saul, the mourning of Judas Iscariot, was not blessed.

I. *What mourner, then, is blessed?* The one that has sincere and earnest grief of repentance; the one that has the godly sorrow that is unto life. The mourning that is blessed is the moral mourning, the mourning of which the Savior says, "Except ye repent ye shall likewise perish." What is meant is the mourning for sin, not its consequences but its enormity as rebellion against the majesty of God, the godly sorrow that worketh repentance not to be repented of.

John the Baptist was the messenger going before the Savior, the voice of one crying in the wilderness, "Repent ye, for the kingdom of heaven is at hand." So must it be in the case of every sinner; the Law must cry out, "Repent!" before the Gospel is offered. No building stands safe unless it stands upon a rock foundation after the sand and soil have been shoveled away. Likewise can you expect no firm Christian character unless the Gospel is applied after all vain excuses and native goodness and virtue have been swept away relentlessly by the Law. We need a searching preaching of the Ten Commandments; they need to be driven into every nook and corner of the human heart, so that no lurking place may be left open to the least leaven of self-righteousness. As Moses fronted Pharaoh; as Nathan fronted David; as Elijah fronted Ahab; as the Baptist fronted the Pharisees: so must the preacher with the Law front each sinner and strike into him a knowledge of his sins and terror of God's righteous punishment. "It is better to hear the rebuke of the wise, than for a man to hear the song of fools," Eccl. 7, 5.

When the surgeon's knife is applied with deft fingers to the human heart, and this is dissected and laid bare to the eyes of man and shown what an unclean nest of crawling things it is, all false pride will escape out of man, and he will mourn his wretched condition. When a man tries, and tries again, and yet again, to raise

himself from his wretched condition, and will fall back and again flounder in the mire, he will mourn his helplessness, the weakness of the powers of which he had boasted so loudly, in which he had trusted so fondly. With St. Paul such a man will know that the good which he would do he does not, but the evil which he would not do, that he does. With St. Paul such a man will cry out in the anguish of his soul, "O wretched man that I am! who shall deliver me from the body of this death?" When the Prophet Isaiah beheld the Lord in His glory, the light of God's holiness showed the prophet's sinfulness, and he became aware of it and cried out, "I am a man of unclean lips," and the natural result was that he also said, "Woe is me, for I am undone!" In a similar manner, when a sinner mirrors himself in God's holy Law, the light flashing from it reveals to him his sinfulness, and creates the conviction, "I am sinful," and the next thing the man learns is, "I am undone!" and the only right thing for him to do in his helplessness is to seek elsewhere, to seek help in Christ, the Seeker and Savior of sinners.

II. *"They shall be comforted."*

In this life, they that mourn their sins in the true spirit and look to Christ for forgiveness shall receive it. "Him that cometh unto me I will in no wise cast out." Yea, "Come unto me all ye that labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest," Matt. 11, 28. "Comfort ye, comfort ye my people, saith your God. Speak ye comfortably to Jerusalem, and cry unto her, that her warfare is accomplished, that her iniquity is pardoned: for she hath received of the Lord's hand double for all her sins," Is. 40, 1. 2. "The Spirit of the Lord God is upon me; because the Lord hath anointed me to preach good tidings unto the meek; He hath sent me to bind up the broken-hearted, to proclaim liberty to the captives, and the opening of the prison to them that are bound; to proclaim the acceptable year of the Lord and the day of vengeance of our God; to comfort all that mourn; to appoint unto them that mourn in Zion, to give unto them beauty for ashes, the oil of joy for mourning, the garment of praise for the spirit of heaviness; that they might be called Trees of righteousness, The planting of the Lord, that He might be glorified," Is. 61, 1—3. Christ took this text and began to preach: "This day is this Scripture fulfilled in your ears," Luke 4, 21. Every time the Gospel of Christ follows upon true repentance, this Scripture is fulfilled, and the mourner is comforted. As long as a man has not looked his sins squarely in the face, nor mourned them heartily, nor asked for forgiveness from God, his heart is not fixed, he is more or less Cain-like, a fugitive and a vagabond on the face of the earth; he is not at peace, not at rest;

coward conscience doth afflict him, and a veil of gloom curtains the whole world.

The laugh of the world is hollow, it does not ring true. The joy is simulated and stimulated. The rich man who was dressed in purple and fine linen and fared sumptuously, that is, lived high, every day was not blessed. He was damned. He was damned, not because he was rich and dressed well and lived well, but because he set his heart on such pleasure. His heart remained cold in selfishness, was not warmed by the love of God or the love of man.

He that has taken a long and steady and deep look at his sinful heart and has sincerely mourned its utter sinfulness and looked to the Lamb of God for forgiveness, he has true joy, his heart is filled with the peace of God, he knows himself God's child and heir. His mourning and his comfort go hand in hand. The fountain of tears and the fountain of laughter lie hard by each other and mingle their waters.

Savior, since of Zion's city
I, through grace, a member am,
Let the world deride or pity,
I will glory in Thy name.
Fading is the worldling's pleasure,
All his boasted pomp and show;
Solid joys and lasting treasure
None but Zion's children know.

A true Christian looks upon himself as a beggar, though he be as rich as Abraham; a true Christian thinks of himself as knowing very little, though he be as wise as Solomon; a true Christian calls himself the chief of sinners, though he be the Lord's elect as Paul. And so the true Christian will always mourn, truly and heartily mourn all sins everywhere, and yet, at the same time, be comforted and filled with true heavenly joy and happiness.

The true Christian will weep with them that weep, and rejoice with them that do rejoice, Rom. 12, 15. The true Christian knows it is blessed to mourn, and he also knows that the Lord says, "Rejoice in the Lord always: and again I say, Rejoice," Phil. 4, 4. He is "sorrowful, yet always rejoicing," 2 Cor. 6, 10.

Chief of sinners though I be,
Jesus shed His blood for me;
Died, that I might live on high,
Lived, that I might never die.
As the branch is to the vine,
I am His, and He is mine.

There is the joy of divine comfort! The heart laughs, sings, and exults. Yes, and it grows strong and hurls defiance at the enemies:

“If God be for us, who shall be against us? He that spared not His own Son, but delivered Him up for us all, how shall He not with Him also freely give us *all* things?” Rom. 8, 31. 32.

When a man has found peace with God, he knows that his mourning for sin has been blessed, and he will believe that all other mourning will also be blessed to him. The slings and arrows of outrageous fortune, the sea of troubles, the heartache, and the thousand natural shocks that flesh is heir to, the whips and scorns of time, the oppressor’s wrong, the proud man’s contumely, the pangs of despised love, the law’s delay, the insolence of office, and the spurns that patient merit of the unworthy takes—all these things he mourns, and all these things shall be blessed to him. “Before I was afflicted I went astray. It is good for me that I have been afflicted; that I might learn Thy statutes,” Ps. 119, 67. 71. “*All* things work together for good to them that love the Lord,” Rom. 8, 28.

Luther says: “The dear preachers especially must well learn such things, and daily be tried in them, that they must swallow all sorts of envy, hate, scoffing, and mockery, ingratitude, contempt, and slander, whereby their heart and soul is pierced and tortured without rest.”

A man will look upon these things also as a tonic, bitter to the taste, blessed to the soul.

No poisoned draught the cup can be
That my Physician sends to me,
But medicine due;
For God is true.
Of doubt, then, I'll divest me
And on His goodness rest me.

“A broken spirit drieth the bones,” says Solomon, Prov. 17, 22. Christ is the “Consolation,” Luke 2, 25, to comfort those that mourn and bind up the broken-hearted. The lower we bend the bow, the higher will rise the arrow: the deeper we are thrust down in sorrow, the higher we shall be comforted with heavenly happiness. In a darkened room you may see the beautiful pictures of the stereopticon: surrounded by sorrow you will appreciate the beautiful pictures of the New Jerusalem drawn by the Bible. God shall wipe away all tears; we shall be comforted as one whom his mother hath comforted; at God’s right hand there are pleasures forevermore; when He shall appear, we shall be like Him. “*Via crucis, via lucis*,” that is, “No cross, no crown.” “Our light affliction, which is but for a moment, worketh for us a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory,” 2 Cor. 4, 17. .

“Blessed are they that mourn, for they shall be comforted.” .

W. D.

Sermon-Outline on Matt. 16, 13—19.

There are few passages in the four Gospels more important and more instructive than this. LUTHER: "This is one of the excellent, high Gospels, and nearly the best part in the Gospel according to St. Matthew; for it contains exceedingly high and excellent articles, in which we Christians are particularly interested, namely, that we learn what and who Christ is, what His Church and His people are, what kind of enemies, and then also what excellent gifts and goods this same Church has." (*Notes on the Gospels*, p. 95.) We have here a private conference of Christ with His disciples concerning Himself.

I.

Peter's noble confession concerning Christ.

a. The *place* where Peter made the good and noble confession, v. 13. (See Acts 10, 38. Matt. 4, 23; 9, 35. Luke 19, 1.) The Son of man is come to seek and to save that which is lost. From this we learn that Christ came into the world to seek, teach, and save men. (Luther.) An inducement to missionary work, both at home and abroad!

b. The *time* when Peter made the noble confession, v. 14: When a variety of false opinions about Christ prevailed among the Jews; when Jesus was in the "form of a servant," poor, without honor, majesty, wealth, or power; when the heads of the Jewish nation, both in church and state, refused to receive Jesus as the Messiah.—Peter's faith was not stumbled by our Lord's poverty and low estate. His confidence was not shaken by the wicked opposition of the scribes and Pharisees, and the contempt of rulers and priests. Peter boldly confessed.—This is well worth of imitation. We too must be ready to confess Christ, even as Peter did, with few on our side, and many against us. Matt. 10, 32, 33.

c. The *occasion* of Peter's noble confession, vv. 13, 15. *α.* Jesus inquires what people's thoughts were concerning Him, v. 13. "There-with He gives us an example, which serves as an incentive to good behavior, that we should be careful that we have a good reputation among those who are without." (Luther.) *β.* Jesus inquires what the disciples' thoughts were concerning Him, v. 15. This question concerns all the disciples alike, and not Peter alone. From this we must draw the conclusion, that the answer of Peter (v. 16) and, afterwards, the reply of Christ (vv. 17—19) are not to be applied to Peter's single person. (Luther.)

d. The noble *confession itself*, v. 16: "Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God." We believe that Thou art not only the

promised Messiah, our Deliverer from sin and death, but also that Thou art the eternal and only begotten Son of God, possessing divine nature, our Lord and King.—LUTHER: “This is a short confession, but the real substance and kernel of the whole Scripture. . . . To know and confess Christ correctly, it is not enough to *say* the words, but to *believe* in the *heart* that this Jesus, born of the Virgin Mary, is the Son of God, who came into the world and became man, that He might bruise the devil’s head, that He might remove the curse under which we all rest on account of sin, and instead bring us again into a state of grace.”

II.

Christ’s eminent reply. It contains

a. A personal beatitude and hearty commendation, v. 17: “Blessed art thou, Simon Bar-jona.” LUTHER: “Thereby the Lord will indicate that whosoever has this confession and knowledge has everything necessary to salvation. Christ says, Peter is blessed because he believes this, and not because he does this or that. For, though God demands good works, yet this faith alone shall be necessary to salvation.” Rom. 10, 10. 11. Peter is blessed for a twofold reason: first, because the Father was pleased to reveal such momentous and life-giving truths to him, and secondly, because Peter had followed the guidance of divine grace, and received the truth with a believing, trusting, and joyful heart. “For flesh and blood hath not revealed it unto thee.” Our reason, without the light and grace of revelation, will not enable us to receive Christ according to the true faith. “I believe that I cannot,” etc. 1 Cor. 2, 14; 12, 3.—“But my Father which is in heaven.” LUTHER: “Now whoever would learn what faith is, and whence it comes, let him listen to Christ. Such faith, He says, is not a human thought; the Father must awaken it by His Word and Spirit. . . . From this it follows that the free will of man can do nothing at all in itself, but only by the grace of God, which makes him free.” (John 8, 32. 34—36.)

b. A consoling lesson concerning the church, vv. 18. 19. *a.* The nature of the church. By the word “Church” Christ does not mean the material building, but an organized society, not the church visible, that is, a society of persons who profess the Christian faith and are gathered about God’s Word, among whom, beside the true Christians, there are also hypocrites; but the church invisible, that is, the people, or assembly, who confess with Peter that Jesus is the Christ and the Son of the living God. (Luther.) It is the entire number of all believers of every age and tongue and people. It is

the entire number of all who are washed in Christ's blood, clothed in Christ's righteousness, joined to Christ by faith. It is "the congregation of saints." This Church, therefore, is to be found wherever true believers are. LUTHER: "The Church exists where you find such faith and confession (as Peter's), whether those people have this appearance before the world or not."— β . Of this His Church Christ says: "Upon this rock I will build my Church." Not Peter but Christ is the foundation of the Church. *Πέτρος* means a piece of rock, a stone. *Πέτρα* means a rock, or bed-rock, out of which stones are cut and on which they are lying. Thus, while Peter is the stone, the piece of rock, Jesus, the Son of the living God, is the foundation, the Bed-Rock. 1 Pet. 2, 5. 1 Cor. 3, 11. Eph. 2, 19—22.—LUTHER: "The rock upon which the Church stands is Christ and His Word. . . . Christ speaks of Himself when He says, 'And upon this Rock,' etc. Upon this rock, that is, upon *me*, not upon *thee*; for Christ does not say, I will build myself upon thee, but thee upon me, because Peter himself must necessarily be built upon Christ the Rock. . . . Christ permitted Peter to fall that we should not regard him as *the* rock, nor build upon him." (*Notes on the Gospels*, p. 97.)— γ . I will build. Christ is Foundation and Builder of the Church, Zech. 6, 12. 13. α . God's means: Word and Sacraments; β . God's instruments: the Christians; all Christians. Ps. 8, 2. Matt. 28, 18—20.—1 Pet. 2, 9.— δ . The safety of the Church. "And the gates of hell shall not prevail against it." Here wicked opposition is implied: the gates of hell, Many are the gates of hell: Satan and his agents, false teachers, persecutors, infidels, etc.—LUTHER: "The gates of hell mean all the power of the devil, together with all his retinue, such as kings and princes, with the wise men of this world, who will all array themselves against this Rock and this faith." But here also consoling security is insured: The gates of hell shall not prevail. "This is the consolation, that although the devil is full of wrath, yet he shall not conquer." (Luther.) John 10, 27—29. Rom. 8, 38. 39. 2 Tim. 1, 12.— ϵ . The treasure of the Church, v. 19. LUTHER: "Such grace we find not only with those whom Christ has, by a special command, appointed to preside over His Church, but also, in case of necessity, with every individual Christian; for the Church—that is, all Christians—has this power and command, that it leaves no sinner to despair in his sins, but comforts him, and in the name of Jesus assures him of forgiveness of sins, Matt. 8, 20. . . . This treasure the Christian church distributes not only in the Word, through absolution and especially the public preaching (as in Acts 2, 41), but also through Baptism and the Lord's Supper."

J. C. A.

Sermon-Outline on Matt. 16, 26.

Man is not all matter. Man has a soul, Matt. 10, 28. Job 14, 22. Luke 12, 20. The soul is imperishable, Eccl. 12, 7. Man values his body, Matt. 6, 25. 28. 34. Ps. 127, 2. Man does not value his soul, Luke 12, 20; 16, 19 ff. 1 Cor. 15, 32. God values man's soul.

THE VALUE OF A SOUL ESTIMATED.

I. *By means of its loss.*

a. The loss of the soul is a fact. It is not altogether an imaginary case which the Lord assumes in our text. That part of it which speaks of the loss of a soul describes an actual occurrence. The mission of Christ was to the "lost," John 3, 15. Luke 19, 10.

b. The manner in which the soul has become lost. Man became a lost creature when he fell from his first estate. He lost the divine image, the knowledge of God, original righteousness, etc. He became utterly carnal, and was swayed by carnal motives, Eph. 2, 1—3; "dead;" v. 12: "no hope," "without God," 4, 18: "alienated from the life of God." John 3, 6.

c. The damage caused by this loss estimated. *Κόσμος* = the created world, especially the place of man's activity, the field of human pursuits. (See Cremer *s. v.*) Glory, wealth, power, learning, culture, ease, joy, peace of the world.—Suppose you should own all this, or gain it in exchange for your soul, still your loss would not be balanced by your gain. Think of it: the whole world inferior in value to one soul! How great, how grievous must that loss be!

d. The effect of the loss. Losses are never pleasant. Men worry over them. They prove destructive. *This* loss damns. At the end the lost are "without," "where there is weeping and gnashing of teeth." That is the final loss of the soul.

II. *By means of its recovery.*

a. Man cannot redeem his lost soul, nor can his fellow man redeem him, Ps. 49, 7. 8.—What have not men attempted to obtain peace of conscience, to save their souls! The penances of paganism, of popery, etc. All of no avail. If much more were done, it would be useless; if the whole world *were* gained and given in exchange for a soul, it would not be a valid ransom. (Third Article.)

b. What man could not do, God has done, 1 Pet. 1, 18. 1 Cor. 6, 20; 7, 23. Acts 20, 28. Hebr. 9, 12. 2 Pet. 2, 1. Rev. 5, 9.—How highly was the soul valued in this ransom, when not even the

sacrifice of God's only Child was deemed too great a price! "God spared not His own Son!" Such a price is not paid for a trifle.

c. The acceptance of this ransom, Acts 16, 30, 31; 2, 37, 38; 4, 12; 10, 43. 1 Tim. 2, 6.—But the ransom can be rejected; in that case the soul is lost a second time. Of that loss the Savior is really speaking in our text. (Compare vv. 24, 25.) Denying Christ = casting away one's soul; accepting Christ = gaining one's soul.

d. Effect of such gain. Joy in heaven, Luke 15, 7; peace on earth, Rom. 5, 1; comfort in sorrow, Rom. 8, 28 ff.; contentment in death, Phil. 1, 21. Ps. 116, 15; glory hereafter, 2 Tim. 4, 8. 1 Pet. 1, 4.

What a treasure must a believing, a regained soul be, when God is seen so abundantly to bless it! W. H. T. D.

Miscellaneous.

The style of the sermon. It is agreed among all writers upon rhetoric that the first property in style is that by virtue of which it is intelligible. The understanding is the avenue to the man. No one is affected by truth who does not apprehend it. Discourse must, therefore, first of all, be *plain*. . . . The preacher should toil after this property of style, as he would toil after virtue itself. He should constantly strive, first of all, to exhibit his thoughts plainly. Whether he shall add force to plainness, and beauty to force, are matters to be considered afterwards. Let him in the first place begin at the beginning, and do the first thing. Endeavors after force, elegance, and beauty, will be likely to succeed, provided this first fundamental in discourse is attained, and they will be sure to fail if it is not. The preacher, at the present time, is liable to temptation in respect to this property of style, because it is not a showy property. The public is too eager after striking externals, for its own good. It demands brilliancy before plainness. . . . The preacher is, consequently, tempted to yield to this false taste of the ill-educated, and to become like the public. The form soon outruns the substance. He pays more and more attention to the expression, and less and less to the thought, and degenerates into a pretentious and glittering declaimer. (D. W. Shedd, *Homiletics*.)